

doors, willing to but not feeling sleep.

We float up over the house, a white stone dot in the middle of a dry landscape of dead yellow weeds. Breathing and an irregular, erratic Heartbeat.

-- Hugh Fox

East Lansing MI

### THE LIPSTICK GRANDMOTHER

The Lipstick Grandmother puts lipstick on all her grandchildren when they come to see her.

With red mouths agape, they listen to her read The Three Bears.

When they kiss each other goodbye, the imprint of their lips is all over them for the world to see.

When they get home they put polish on their toes and fingers, rouge on their cheeks.

For Christ's sake, say their parents.

They order the little boys to take off their lipstick and fingernail polish. You can keep the toe polish, they say, but wear your socks. Your rouge we can explain as natural coloring inherited from your parents.

But the little girls are allowed to wear everything: lipstick, rouge and polish. They can go to visit their Lipstick Grandmother as often as they wish.

Here they come now, says their Lipstick Grandmother. The little whores.

-- Joseph Nicholson

Flemington PA